

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 897

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TAGS: ELAB, PINT, PO

SUBJ: LABOR GROUPS OPPOSE INTERSINDICAL

REF: (A) LISBON 837 (DTG 061139Z FEB 76), (B) LISBON 488

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SUMMARY: IN AN IMPORTANT LABOR MEETING THE SOCIALIST PARTY
HAS DEFINED ITS LABOR STRATEGY OPPOSING INTERSINDICAL.
THE MEETING CALLED FOR REVOCATION OF INTERSINDICAL'S LEGAL STATUS
AND FOR A NEW NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS TO CREATE A DEMOCRATIC,
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INDEPENDENT CONFEDERATION. OTHER LABOR GROUPS HAVE ALSO

ISSUED STATEMENTS QUESTIONING INTERSINDICAL'S STATUS AS THE LEGALLY CONSTITUTED NATIONAL LABOR CONFEDERATION. IT IS POSSIBLE THE GOVERNMENT MAY LIFT LEGAL RECOGNITION OF INTERSINDICAL FOLLOWING AN OBLIGATORY REVIEW OF LABOR LEGISLATION. END SUMMARY.

1. SOCIALIST PARTY: THREE HUNDRED SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) LABOR LEADERS MET IN THE NORTHERN CITY OF AVEIRO JANUARY 30- FEBRUARY 1 TO DISCUSS LABOR STRATEGY. THE MAJOR RESOLUTIONS PASSED BY THE MEETING WERE:

-- THE GOVERNMENT SHOULD REVOKE DECREE LAW 215-A/75 WHICH RECOGNIZES INTERSINDICAL AS THE NATIONAL LABOR CONFEDERATION.

-- ALL DECISIONS TAKEN BY THE INTERSINDICAL-SPONSORED NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS, HELD IN JULY, 1975, SHOULD BE CONSIDERED INVALID.

-- ALL PORTUGUESE WORKERS SHOULD STRIVE WITHIN THEIR UNIONS TO REVOKE THE STATUTES OF INTERSINDICAL AND FORCE THE REMOVAL OF ITS SECRETARIAT.

-- A NEW NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS SHOULD BE CONVOKED, AS PROVIDED BY THE LAW GOVERNING LABOR ORGANIZATION, TO CREATE A DEMOCRATIC AND INDEPENDENT LABOR CONFEDERATION.

-- THE STATUTES OF THE CONFEDERATION SHOULD GUARANTEE THE RIGHTS OF POLITICAL DIVERSITY AND FREE EXPRESSION.

2. THE SOCIALIST PARTY MEETING UNANIMOUSLY REJECTED LABOR "PLURALISM" (I.E., THE CREATION OF MORE THAN ONE NATIONAL CONFEDERATION) AS WELL AS THE CONCEPT OF A SINGLE CONFEDERATION IMPOSED BY LAW. INSTEAD, THE SOCIALISTS CALLED FOR A SINGLE LABOR CONFEDERATION FORMED BY VOLUNTARY AFFILIATION OF FEDERATIONS AND UNIONS WHICH WOULD REPLACE INTERSINDICAL ONCE LEGAL RECOGNITION HAD BEEN REMOVED FROM THE EXISTING SECRETARIAT. THE MEETING LEFT THE QUESTION UNRESOLVED WHETHER THE PROPOSED NEW CONFEDERATION SHOULD RETAIN THE NAME "INTERINDICAL."

3. THE SOCIALISTS RECOGNIZE THAT IT WILL BE DIFFICULT TO ACHIEVE THEIR OBJECTIVES. HOWEVER, THEY ARE HOPEFUL THE GOVERNMENT WILL REMOVE INTERSINDICAL'S LEGAL RECOGNITION

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WHEN THE EXISTING LABOR LEGISLATION IS OBLIGATORILY SUBJECTED TO REVIEW DURING APRIL, 1976. MARIO SOARES TOLD THE AMBASSADOR FOLLOWING THE AVEIRO MEETING THAT HE BELIEVED THE SOCIALISTS MAY BE ABLE TO CAPTURE CONTROL OF INTERSINDICAL FROM WITHIN (REF A). RECENT INDICATIONS THAT THE ICFTU AND THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE SECRETARIATS (ITS'S) ARE PLANNING TO HOLD UP TO 23 TRAINING SEMINARS DURING 1976 AT THE SOCIALIST-LINKED CENTER FOR SYNDICAL STUDIES (CES) MAY BE PARTIAL CAUSE FOR SOARES

STATEMENT. CES DIRECTOR MADUREIRA DEPARTED FOR GENEVA FEB 10 TO MEET WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF FIVE OF THE ITS'S.

4. POPULAR DEMOCRATIC PARTY (PPD): SECRETARY OF STATE FOR OCCUPATIONAL TRAINING FURTADO FERNANDES, A PPD APPOINTEE, TOLD LABATT THAT PPD DOES NOT SHARE THE SOCIALISTS' OPTIMISM. RATHER, THEY BELIEVE THAT THE PCP'S CONTROL OF THE INTERSINDICAL SECRETARIAT IS SUFFICIENT TO THWART ANY ATTEMPT TO CAPTURE THE CONFEDERATION FROM WITHIN. AS AN EXAMPLE FERNANDES CITED THE CASE OF THE LISBON CIVIL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNION WHERE A LAST MINUTE ARBITRARY CHANGE IN THE ELECTION RULES PREVENTED THE PRESENTATION OF A SOCIALIST SLATE IN OPPOSITION TO THE UNION'S PCP LEADERSHIP.

5. THE PPD STRATEGY IS SIMILAR TO THAT OF THE SOCIALISTS IN COUNTING ON A NEW NATIONAL LABOR CONGRESS TO BREAK THE HOLD OF THE PCP ON THE LABOR CONFEDERATION. IT DIFFERS FROM THE SOCIALISTS ON THE WISDOM OF WORKING FROM WITHIN INTERSINDICAL IN ORDER TO EFFECT THIS CHANGE. IT IS OF INTEREST THAT TEN PS-LED UNIONS OF THE LISBON AREA HAVE CALLED FOR ALL UNIONS TO AFFILIATE WITH INTERSINDICAL IN ORDER TO MAKE THEIR OPPOSITION EFFECTIVE. IN CONTRAST, UNIONS IN THE OPORTO AREA, WHERE PPD INFLUENCE IS STRONGER, HAVE CONTINUED TO DISAFFILIATE FROM THE CONFEDERATION.

6. REORGANIZING MOVEMENT OF THE PORTUGUESE PROLETARIAT (MRPP): THE MAOIST MRPP AND THE SOCIALISTS IN THE PAST HAVE FORMED TACIT COALITIONS AND JOINT ELECTORAL SLATES TO CONTEST UNION ELECTIONS. THE IDEOLOGICAL MILITANCY OF THE MRPP HAS UNDERMINED THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THESE SLATES IN THOSE CASES WHERE THEY HAVE WON. THE SOCIALISTS, DURING THEIR AVEIRO MEETING, DECIDED THAT THE MRPP'S LIMITED VOTING STRENGTH (NORMALLY LESS THAN 10 PERCENT WHEN STANDING INDEPENDENTLY) DOES NOT

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JUSTIFY FURTHER COALITIONS. THE MRPP, IN TURN, ISSUED A STATEMENT REJECTING BOTH THE INTERSINDICAL AND THE PS VERSIONS OF LABOR UNITY AND CALLED INSTEAD FOR UNIONS "SERVING THE INTERESTS OF PORTUGUESE WORKERS."

7. BASE - FRENTE UNITARIA DE TRABALHADORES (BASE - FUT): THE KONRAD ADENAUER FOUNDATION - SUPPORTED BASE - FUT ALSO ISSUED A STATEMENT ATTACKING INTERSINDICAL AS BEING CREATED BY NON-REPRESENTATIVE UNIONS AND WITHOUT THE WORKERS HAVING BEEN GIVEN AN OPPORTUNITY TO CONSIDER THE PROPOSED STATUTES.

8. COMMENT: GROUNDS UNDOUBTEDLY EXIST FOR IMPUGNING THE VALIDITY OF THE JULY 1975 LABOR CONGRESS AND THE GOP'S LEGAL RECOGNITION OF INTERSINDICAL AS THE NATIONAL LABOR CONFEDERATION. MINISTER OF LABOR TOMAS ROSA IS KNOWN TO BE CONSIDERING JUST

SUCH A MOVE. THE LEGALLY REQUIRED REVIEW OF THE EXISTING LABOR
LEGISLATION AFTER ONE YEAR, I.E., APRIL 30, 1976, AND THE
MOVES BY THE SOCIALISTS AND OTHER LABOR GROUPS QUESTIONING
INTERSINDICAL'S LEGITIMACY WOULD SEEM TO MAKE SUCH ACTION
MORE PLAUSIBLE.
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